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Kathleen Kettermann
Indiana University Press

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Sibling Rivalry

by **Kathleen Ketterman**

(Assistant Director and Marketing Manager, Indiana University Press)



In the spirit of good family fun, my sister, **Barbara von Wahlde**, Director of University Libraries at SUNY at Buffalo, and I asked Katina Strauch if we might organize a session for the 1992 Charleston Conference. As siblings in related, but sometimes thought to be rival professions, we decided to call our session "Sibling Rivalry."

Over the years, my sister and I have often discussed our professional concerns and interests. It is only in the last 6-12 months, though, that those concerns have taken on a different sense of urgency and level of intensity. We knew that the many new questions and issues raised by the technological changes related to electronic publishing and its impact on librarians and publishers had culminated in our unease and contributed to our mutual anxiety. We seemed to often be asking the same questions but were perhaps motivated by different concerns.

The Charleston Conference, we thought, could provide an opportunity for us to explore these issues and concerns and to see how they intersected and overlapped in our world of scholarly libraries and publishing. After some telephone and fax collaboration (I wasn't yet on e-mail), we put together the following survey that we hoped would provide a vehicle for a session that would discuss these issues and concerns.

We asked participants to indicate to which category they belonged and to rank their level of concern about the

following questions and issues. We received 141 completed surveys representing about 33% of the participants. We manually compiled the surveys in advance of our session hoping to use the results to stimulate discussion and to draw some conclusions about our mutual concerns.

The Survey

SURVEY OF QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- Librarians • Publishers
- Vendors • Others

1 = very concerned, 2 = concerned,
3 = mildly concerned,
4 = not concerned

•Will libraries stop buying books and journals in favor of electronic media? How soon?

•Who is the publisher of information on a network—the author? the library? the vendor?

•Do we need vendors? What is a library? Who is a publisher?

•What kind of information might best be made available electronically?

•What considerations should publishers make when pricing electronic media products?

•What considerations must be taken into account when deciding what to charge users for access to electronic information?

•Who benefits from electronic communication?

•What happens to the peer review process in scholarly communication?

•Will the scholarly community of tenure committees, departmental chairs and deans accept electronic text as equal to a published book?

•How will authors and editors be paid for use of their electronic texts?

•Is there such a thing as an electronic "book" or is the concept of a book obsolete in an electronic world?

•Who "owns" electronic text when it is available on a network?

•How do authors control their text if subject to change by anyone with the electronic technology and know-how to change that text?

•How will electronic texts be archived? What happens to the citation system when electronic texts are malleable rather than fixed in print?

•Is it only those able to afford the new technology who will control that communication?

•How will our jobs be effected by a shift to more electronic publishing?

The Results

In compiling the results, we realized how impossible was our task: the survey was too long, some issues too ambiguous and open-ended, and some questions were not quantifiable for us to measure in a way that could be considered scientific. But despite those caveats, we did discover some com-

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We would like to thank
Ambassador Book Service
and The Book House
for their generous contributions!
Thanks go as well to **Ballen Booksellers.**

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mon concerns and believe they are representative of our community of librarians, publishers, vendors, and others ("others" being publishing and library consultants).

Librarians

In identifying the top three or four concerns of each group we discovered that: librarians are concerned about what electronic information will cost; what costs their users might be asked to bear in what has traditionally been a free environment; and how this electronic material might be preserved.

Publishers

Publishers were concerned with whether librarians were going to stop buying what we produce — books and journals; how to decide which information to make available in electronic format that will appeal to librarians to purchase in that format; and the mutual concern with librarians of pricing considerations. There seemed to be considerable overlap between librarians and publishers in several key issues that leads us to believe that we could look for cooperation and develop partnerships between librarians and publishers.

Vendors

Vendors were more of a "wild card" in terms of their responses. They were concerned about the affordability of the new technology and who would control that type of communication; the concept of the electronic book; and how their jobs would be affected. All of us were variously concerned with what our careers will be like in a few more years — what are the jobs we will be doing, will we have jobs, how different will they be, what will be the changes? The vendors also had some interest in pricing considerations but not nearly to the extent of librarians and publishers.

Others

Others, i.e. consultants, were (somewhat surprisingly to us) interested in peer review as were librarians and publishers; in how authors will maintain control of their texts in an electronic environment; and in pricing considerations.

We did have a number of surveys

returned with no category checked and we dubbed them "The Unknowns," but thought it fair to assume, from the breakdown of the participants, that more than half of "The Unknowns" were librarians.

Finally, in trying to determine mutual interests and concerns, it is significant to remember that a key component is left out of these discussions. It is not enough to ask what librarians, vendors, and publishers prefer or need or are concerned about. We need to ask the individual as well. We are neglecting an entire category whose response to these questions would make the results of our survey in some cases, we are quite certain, very different. Individual scholars are our users, purchasers, and authors of the electronic text — by not including them in our survey we cannot have a full measure of our common issues and concerns.

It might be useful here to conclude by mentioning a few of the comments that were made during the general discussion of these issues. One librarian expressed concern that undergraduate students could not afford the costs of document delivery. Publishers wonder how, if electronic products can be produced inexpensively and therefore priced so low, how the sale of these products can support a structure that is still geared to the production and sale of the traditional book. If text is going to be made available in an electronic format, will it be ASCII or image-based text? What is the difference and which is preferable? A marketing manager said she needed a lot more information before even recommending what her publishing house ought to be doing electronically even though librarians keep asking her when certain of their products will be available in an electronic format. How do we start? How do we go about it?

CD-ROM was mentioned as a format to "ease into" electronic publishing, but that is a very different matter than tackling the issue of how do we publish on the network. Also, librarians said that they considered CD-ROM to be a "transient" technology and did not want to invest heavily in CD-ROM. Of those libraries with CD-ROM players some could only accommodate one user at a time and they have long lines and sign-up sheets that make having this kind of configuration unattractive to users. Librarians are trying to figure

out how effectively to spend the money available to them to provide adequate access to the user and to offer the broad array of electronic products that are available in today's market.

Another important point was made by **Dimi Berkner**, the marketing manager of Columbia University Press. If librarians begin to replace the purchase of books and journals with paying usage fees only for the access to the information, the publishers' high initial development costs of CD-ROM products could make it uneconomical to use that format for any but the most popular or generally referenced material that receives the greatest use and hence greatest payback to the publisher. Scholarly publishers will be taking an even greater risk if they begin to replace what they are mandated to publish, the typical scholarly monograph with an admittedly limited market, with an electronic version that librarians would only pay usage fees to access rather than paying for the actual ownership of that text.

In thinking about this point, I think it is fair to say that a work of scholarship made available electronically does not necessarily mean an expanded market. It might mean expanded access but the two are not the same. The nature of collection development and the notion of what constitutes a purchase are just two elements that need to be redefined in light of the electronic environment.

One of the librarians also wondered about the level of technical support from the developer (publisher) after the product is purchased and their users have difficulty with making the software work.

Conclusion

In wrapping up our session, both Barbara and I felt it was extremely important to urge librarians and publishers especially, who in our survey were shown to have several overlapping areas of concern, to keep the door open and to develop and continue a dialogue whenever there is an opportunity. Having a sibling in the same or related field does give one unusual opportunities to discuss subjects of mutual interest. But, if you lack this advantage, conferences like the one in Charleston and others that have been sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries

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Legally Speaking

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of the FTA was one attempt to preserve Canadian culture in the free trade context. A majority of Canadians voted for the FTA in a national referendum, but it is not clear that it would have passed without the cultural industries exemption.

To U.S. officials, the cultural industries exemption is antithetical to free market principles and to the objectives of the FTA and NAFTA. Further, the U.S. negotiating position attempts to treat cultural products as informational products, and to link culture with such issues as the free flow of information, technologic transfer, trade in services, and the protection of intellectual property. This approach is consistent with certain U.S. economic and foreign policy objectives, namely the stimulation of world trade in services, where we enjoy significant competitive advantages, and the promotion of democracy throughout the world.

In this context, the FTA and NAFTA are important to the U.S. not so much in terms of actual trade with Canada and Mexico, but rather as models for other multilateral trade agreements, including the mother of all such treaties, the GATT. The stakes are somewhat high for the U.S. here, since we probably cannot expect the rest of the world to accept our rules for international trade if we cannot get our largest trading partner, and closest neighbor, to go along with us. The cultural industries exemption is sticking in the collective craw of U.S. policy makers because it may set a precedent for others, especially the members of the European Community, to discriminate against American music, entertainment and publishing companies.

Most Americans are undoubtedly unaware of the disagreement with Canada over cultural industries (heck, a Macleans poll in 1987 showed that only 57% of Americans knew that we had even entered into the FTA, and only 12% knew that Canada was our biggest trading partner, versus 97% and 83% of Canadians, respectively). Canadians, on the other hand, are keenly aware of the issue. Cultural preservation is closely linked with national identity in Canada, and is thus the subject of intense interest. When U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills, prior

to commencement of NAFTA negotiations, made an off-the-cuff remark about the FTA's cultural exemption being on the table for NAFTA, a firestorm ensued in Canada. Blistering editorials appeared in the Canadian press, and the Canadian government responded forcefully that cultural industries were not on the table. As the NAFTA text indicates, the U.S. backed off quickly.

As we debate the future of the book, as we discuss the role of electronics in scholarship and reading generally, as we talk increasingly about information products, and as we describe ourselves with some phrase beginning with "information" (and ending with "provider," "broker," "manager," etc.), it is interesting to note how "information" is being treated in the international trade context. Culture is not information, and cultures should be preserved. Cor-

Letters

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Dear Editor:

The last two issues of *ATG* have been especially good and just chock-full of information. *ATG* is really wonderful for those of us without other acquisitions/collection development professionals at our institutions with whom to share ideas.

Well, it is beautiful up here in western Michigan, so I only occasionally miss going to the Virginia, N.C. and S.C. coasts. The sand dunes of Lake Michigan are beautiful, and the water is the color of the Caribbean (just a lot cooler). I still yearn for the Charleston Conference again, but it's hard to wrangle money for travel. Still, Charleston or bust...

Marcie Kingsley
(Western Michigan University)

Dear Editor:

In the "thank you" department, I don't want to forget Dorinda and Dana who gave me more cooperation at the Charleston Conference than I deserved.

Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)☞

rectly or not, Canada has determined that the cultural industries exemption is necessary for the preservation of Canadian culture.

While U.S. concerns about the potentially damaging precedent established by the cultural industry exemption of the FTA are legitimate, do they rank with Canadian fears about completely losing their cultural identity? I think not, especially in light of the huge shares of the Canadian cultural markets that American companies already control. For U.S. trade officials to continue to insist otherwise is to say that too much is not enough.☞

And They Were There

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Ms. Backlund provided a generous assortment of handouts and brochures. Members then had the choice of touring either the UT Fine Arts Library or the UT Visual Resources Collection.

Following lunch, participants were treated to a tour of the studio of Austin fine printer **W. Thomas Taylor**. Mr. Taylor, a former rare book dealer, is now principally a designer who works with a master printer in the production of books, brochures, posters and other publications. He gave an informal talk on different fine printing technologies, with an emphasis on his current use of photo-polymer printing plates which incorporate the use of negatives produced with the Macintosh.

The annual meeting was a success, as ARLIS members learned about the wonderful resources in Austin, and established or renewed contacts with other Texas art and visual resources librarians. As one member put it, "We only meet once a year because people are so widely dispersed throughout Texas, but we do know how to put on a great conference."☞

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and the Association of American University Presses provide the kind of forum that allows publishers, librarians, and in some cases vendors, consultants and academics to mingle and to debate the issues of mutual interest and concern that prove once again that we are all truly in the same family. ☞